

COMMUNICATION

by Rabbi Label Lam

And Moshe spoke before HASHEM saying, "They, the Children of Israel will not listen to me and how will Pharaoh listen to me and I am of uncircumcised lips. (Shemos 6:12)...HASHEM said to Moshe, "See, I have made you a master over Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your spokesman. You shall speak everything that I command you, and Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he should send the Children of Israel, from his land. But I shall harden Pharaoh's heart and I multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh will not heed you, and you shall put My hand upon Egypt; and I shall take out My legions-My people the Children of Israel- from the land of Egypt, with great judgments. And Egypt shall know that I am HASHEM, when I stretch out My hand over Egypt; and I shall take the Children of Israel out from among them." (Shemos 7:1-5)

What is the nature of Moshe's complaint? He correctly claims that the Children of Israel and (how much more so) Pharaoh refuse to listen and then he goes back to an old argument and states again that he has uncircumcised lips. Why does he regress? Is this a restatement of the "unworthiness for leadership" argument? That was resolved earlier and Moshe had already accepted the mission. Is the problem with the recipients of the "message" or with imperfection of the "messenger"?

In that strategy meeting between HASHEM and Moshe, we may find the answer to Moshe's objection and a clue to the nature of his problem? 1-He is assured that he is a master over Pharaoh, and his brother will be his spokesman. 2-He is commanded to carry out the mission. 3- He's given certain talking points; like insisting that Pharaoh send the Children of Israel out of Egypt. 4-He is informed that there will not be instant results. There will be some foot dragging on Pharaoh's part. A steep price will be exacted in the form of compounding "plagues". 5-In the end though even the people of Egypt will know as fact that, "I am HASHEM". Egypt then will have heard but is that the goal? Is it all only to convince Egypt?

I have identified five critical ingredients necessary for effective communication. I like to call them the five "M's" of communication. Let's check off the boxes and see which are accounted for and attempt to determine by the process of elimination, what the basis was of Moshe's hesitancy. 1) The messenger: Moshe and Aaron are affirmed as the ones fitting to communicate. 2) The message: The script, the text of the communication is tight and couldn't be more-clear, "Let My people go!" 3) The motive: I don't think it's possible to find a more-noble or just cause than following the precise dictates of the Creator-HASHEM. Moshe doesn't need to apologize to any creature or power for what he must do. 4) The method: Sure it's a tough love approach. "The words of the wise are heard

when spoken softly" but they are backed up by a big stick because there's a lot convincing to be done. What's left? 5) The moment: When is the real "teachable moment"? When will all of Moshe's concerns have been dispelled?

The Sefas Emes offers the following amazing insight, "Because the Children of Israel will not listen, therefore he was of uncircumcised lips...Speech is in exile as long as the recipients are not ready to hear the words of HASHEM..." He goes on to explain that to the extent that the listener is unavailable, the words are hidden. The more ready and willing the recipients are the more open and revealed the message might be. The greatest proof of this is found by the giving of the Torah when the sky opened up and it was declared, "I am HASHEM..." it's no mistake that that was the most pure moment of preparedness as we stood then poised to receive the highest and holiest **commmmmunication**.
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